

CLAIMS

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1. Polypeptide which is composed of the amino acids  $1207 \pm 10$  to  $1488 \pm 10$  of a hepatitis C virus and has less than 20 foreign amino acids.
2. Polypeptide as claimed in claim 1, which contains amino acids  $1207 \pm 5$  to  $1488 \pm 5$  of a hepatitis C virus.
3. Polypeptide as claimed in claim 1 or 2, which contains amino acids  $1207 \pm 2$  to  $1488 \pm 2$  of a hepatitis C virus.
4. Polypeptide as claimed in one of the claims 1 to 3, which contains amino acids 1207 to 1488 of a hepatitis C virus.
5. Polypeptide as claimed in one of the claims 1 to 4, which contains amino acids 14 - 295 of the amino acid sequence shown in SEQ ID NO. 1 or an amino acid sequence which is at least 90 % homologous to this.
6. Polypeptide as claimed in one of the claims 1 to 5, which contains at least one marker group.

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7. Polypeptide as claimed in one of the claims 1 to 6,  
wherein  
it contains one or several sulfhydryl groups in a  
covalently modified form.
8. Polypeptide as claimed in one of the claims 1 to 6,  
wherein  
one or several cysteine residues are replaced by  
other amino acids.
9. Polypeptide as claimed in claim 8,  
wherein  
one or several cysteine residues are replaced by  
serine or  $\alpha$ -aminobutyric acid.
10. Nucleic acid,  
wherein  
it codes for a polypeptide as claimed in one of the  
claims 1 to 9.
11. Nucleic acid as claimed in claim 10,  
wherein  
it contains
  - (a) nucleotides 40 - 885 of the nucleotide  
sequence shown in SEQ ID NO.1 or
  - (b) a nucleotide sequence which corresponds to  
a sequence from (a) within the scope of the  
degeneracy of the genetic code.
12. Vector,  
wherein  
it contains at least one copy of a nucleic acid as  
claimed in claim 10 or 11.

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in which polypeptide  $P_1$  (a) is bound to a solid phase or (b) is present in a form capable of binding to a solid phase and polypeptide  $P_2$  carries a marker group,  
and the antibody is detected by determining the label in the solid phase or/and in the liquid phase.

20. Method as claimed in claim 18,  
wherein  
the sample liquid is incubated with a polypeptide  $P_1$  which (a) is bound to a solid phase or (b) is present in a form capable of binding to a solid phase and with a further antibody directed towards  $P_1$  which carries a marker group and the antibody to be determined is detected by determining the label in the solid phase or/and in the liquid phase.
21. Method as claimed in one of the claims 18 to 20,  
wherein  
the determination of the antibody is carried out under reducing conditions.
22. Reagent for the immunological determination of an antibody directed towards a hepatitis C virus,  
wherein  
it contains at least one polypeptide as claimed in one of the claims 1 to 9.
23. Reagent as claimed in claim 22, containing at least two polypeptides  $P_1$  and  $P_2$ , wherein polypeptide  $P_1$  (a) is bound to the solid phase or (b) is present in a form capable of binding to a solid phase and the polypeptide  $P_2$  carries a marker group.

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24. Reagent as claimed in claim 22, containing a polypeptide  $P_1$  which (a) is bound to a solid phase or (b) is present in a form capable of binding to a solid phase and an antibody directed towards  $P_1$  which carries a label.
25. Use of a polypeptide as claimed in one of the claims 1 to 9 for the production of a vaccine.
26. Method for the immunological determination of an antibody directed towards a hepatitis C virus in a sample liquid, wherein the sample liquid is incubated with at least one polypeptide which contains sequence regions from the hepatitis C virus, in particular from the NS3 region of the hepatitis C virus, and the antibody is detected by binding to the polypeptide, wherein
- a polypeptide is used from a region that contains at least one cysteine residue and (a) the determination of the antibody is carried out under reducing conditions, (b) one or several cysteine residues are covalently modified or/and (c) one or several cysteine residues are replaced by other amino acids.

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The bottom of the page features two distinct handwritten signatures. The upper signature is a complex, cursive scribble. The lower signature is more legible, appearing to read 'adl B 27' followed by a long horizontal stroke.